

ACSA AND CARS+ Goals and Objectives Aligned to Standards

The Need and Purpose

Recruitment and retention of special education teachers was the catalyst for the handbook. Special Education teachers are leaving the field in droves. It was very evident there was a need to assist new and tenured special education teachers in their efforts to write appropriate goals and objectives/benchmarks. It makes the complex job of the special educator a little easier by providing a step-by-step guide for writing goals and objectives/benchmarks aligned to standards.

The Handbook's committee chair submitted an activity design to ACSA to begin the project of aligning IEP's to State Standards. Clearly, IDEA 97 defined special education's need to access the general education curriculum. Thus, in the first three years of the handbook development the main area of focus was to align with the State Standards.

After three years of research ACSA approached CARS+ to formulate a partnership to complete the project. Together both organizations presented the final product during the ACSA 2002 Symposium and again in February at the CARS+ 2002 Annual Conference.

Results Of Work

Since its release in January of 2002, the Handbook has taken the field of special education by storm. CARS+ printed 3500 to give each member. As a courtesy to new membership, CARS+ has continued to give the handbook to newly recruited members. Membership has increased by 500 members. ACSA has printed and sold over 3,500 copies at a price of 10.00 each. The California Department of Education invited the Handbook committee to present at five regional field meetings across the state of California.

Other trainings have been organized throughout the state. CARS+ has had 30 trainings while ACSA has held over 35 trainings. CAL-Stat has supported the efforts of districts to train general educators and special educators with financial assistance. All of the trainings have been given rave reviews. Not only have special educators been given a tool that allow them to be in the forefront of the standards revolution, but also it has allowed them to join hands with general educators and communicate by using a common language of standards. General educators are becoming increasingly more interested in the handbook due to their need to develop benchmarks for students towards grade level standards.

What districts and SELPAS are saying about the Handbook and Trainings:

- Glen Sarot from Imperial County SELPA stated the ACSA training has had a powerful impact on our SELPA. Out in the field, we are writing better IEP's. The comfort level of writing IEP's to standards has increased.
- One administrator shared that he was skeptical until the training and now he understands how to do write to standards as well as why.
- Ron Powell from Desert Mountain SELPA commented that they are having a major push in this area. After the trainer of trainers inservice provided by ACSA, their trainers are focused on alignment of the State standards and to the Teaching Professional Standards. He stated his teachers will continue and use all tools and techniques that can help make Teachers more comfortable and unified as a learning community.
- CARS+ reports that evaluators have found trainings to be informative, effective and extremely useful.

- State Universities such as Sacramento, Chico, Long Beach, San Francisco to name a few, have ordered the handbook and it has become a required reading for new and beginning teachers.

Products, Trainings, Information Disseminations

The collaborative effort between ACSA and CARS+ has resulted in a powerful document The Handbook of Goals and Objectives Related to Essential State of California Content Standards. The handbook walks individuals through WHY writing goals and objectives to standards is key with the implementation of IDEA 97. Next, the handbook explains HOW to write goals and objectives aligned to Content Standards. Other sections are the Essential Standards and sample goals and objectives/benchmarks for each standard in the areas of reading, writing and math. The goal/objective bank is not a template but rather a guide for the teacher in order to develop a student's IEP aligned to Standards.

The handbook is available in a pdf file at acsa.org and carsplus.org. It can also be purchased through ACSA at (916) 444-3216 for \$10.00 or CARS+ (916) 441-0470 for \$16.00. Additional trainings are available through all three organizations. It is highly recommended that all special educators attend a training session to get the full benefit from the document.

Future Outcomes of the Handbook

Currently, we are working with different groups and organizations to update the handbook. ACSA has been approached by SED ELD group to align our current bank of standards to the ELD standards. A small group of Speech and Language Specialists has also approached ACSA to align standards with speech goals. We will also be working with CDE SED on the inclusion of SH standards and indicators leading up to the standard. We are also working with an organization in order to possibly have the goals available online to use with computer generated IEP's. Our goal is to present an updated version of the handbook each January.

The ULTIMATE outcome of the Handbook and trainings is that every special education teacher in the State has a copy and begins to:

1. Access general education curriculum
2. Identify the standards in need
3. Write goals and objectives/benchmarks aligned to standards
4. Assess by using interim assessments aligned to standards that can also check for annual yearly progress.
5. Adjust for mastery teaching and learning

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